Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph from page 14, line 11, to page 15, line 11, with the following paragraph:

To determine a contour or geometry characteristic value, the measuring head 1 comprises a sensor housing 2 on which a sensing tip 4 is disposed. The sensing tip 4 is made from diamond, but may also be in multi-component form using a material with a suitably selected hardness. To determine a contour or geometry characteristic value of an object 7, which may in particular be a fuel rod or a spacer in a fuel assembly, the sensing tip 4 can be guided along the object, in mechanical contact therewith. Any change in the contour or geometry at the surface of the object to be examined results in a change in the position of the sensing tip 4 and therefore the measuring head 1 overall, in the direction x indicated by the double arrow 8. To provide a characteristic measured value for a change in position of this nature, the measuring head 1 is arranged at the free end 10 of a sensing arm 12. For its part, the sensing arm 12 is suitably secured to a carrier device 56 at its other end, which is not illustrated in more detail in Fig. 1. In the exemplary embodiment shown in Fig. 1, the sensing arm 12 is made from spring steel sheet. In this case, a deflection of the free end 10 of the sensing arm 12 as a result of a change in position of the measuring head 1 in

the measuring direction x leads to bending or deformation of the spring steel sheet. This can be recorded quantitatively by way of a strain gauge 14 mounted on the surface of the sensing arm 12. Therefore, an assembly of this type makes it possible to record even relatively minor changes in the position of the measuring head 1 in the direction x with a high resolution.

Please replace the paragraph on page 15, lines 13-18, with the following paragraph:

As an alternative, or in addition, the sensing arm 12 may also be provided with a bending joint 11, the bending angle of which can be recorded using a suitable bending angle sensor 13. In that case, the position of the measuring head 1 in direction x can be determined by combined analysis of measured values of the strain gauge 14 and the bending angle sensor 13.